



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health

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STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

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Dear Principal:

The Virginia Department of Health, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE), has developed a rabies awareness educational packet entitled "Stay Away From Strays." The health department is making this information available to Virginia's elementary schools in anticipation of Rabies Awareness Week, April 3-8, 2006. A link to an electronic copy of this packet is available on the VDOE website within the science resources section at: www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/Elem_M/Science/elementary_sci.html.

We realize that your teachers are very busy preparing their students for the Standards of Learning examinations during this time of the year. We hope this information will complement the material your fourth grade teachers are presenting about health education standards, specifically health standard 4.4 which aims to help students "demonstrate an understanding of health concepts and behaviors that prevent illness of self and others." While we would be delighted if your fourth grade teachers chose to present this information during Rabies Awareness Week, they should feel free to use it at anytime up through the end of the school year.

Public health representatives are available to assist teachers in presenting this information to fourth grade students. Please feel free to call the Virginia Department of Health's Office of Epidemiology at 804-864-8141 and ask to speak with either Julia Murphy or Susan Fischer Davis and we will make every effort to arrange for a local health authority (e.g., health department representative, animal control officer, veterinarian) to assist.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this educational opportunity.

Sincerely,

Julia Murphy, DVM, MS, DACVPM
State Public Health Veterinarian

Susan Fischer Davis, MD
Acting Director, Division of Zoonotic and
Environmental Epidemiology

Enclosures